THE

RUSSIAN PROPHECY,

A POEM,

Occaſioned by

A REMARKABLE PHŒNOMENON IN THE HEAVENS,

OBSERVED IN RUSSIA, FEBRUARY 19, 1785.

" Agnoſcas regina libens mea ſigna neceſſe eſt;
" In quibus effigies CRUCIS aut gemmata refulget
" Aut longis ſolido ex auro præfertur in haſtis.
" HOC SIGNO INVICTUS, tranſmiſſis Alpibus ultor
" Servitium ſolvit miſerabile CONSTANTINUS."

Prudent. in Symmochum, L 2. — 464.

SHEFFIELD:

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MDCCLXXXVII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SACRED

TO THE

GLORY & IMPERIAL VIRTUES

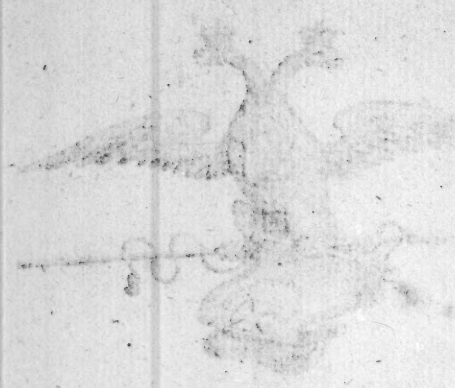
OF

CATHARINE THE GREAT,

EMPRESS

OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

685



IT may be neceſſary to apprize the Reader of the following Poem, ſubmitted to the Eye of the Public, that it was really compoſed in the Year 1785, ſoon after an Account of the celeſtial Phœnomenon which gave Riſe to it, had been tranſmitted to England. Nor would the Poem have now emerged from the Obſcurity in which it has ſo long lain dormant, had not the recent Declaration of War by the Porte, againſt the Ruſſians, induced the Author to attend to the Wiſhes of ſome literary Friends; who were of Opinion, that the preſent Juncture of Time was the propereſt Seaſon for the Publication of "The Ruſſian Prophecy."

684

THE

RUSSIAN PROPHECY.

BORNE on her eagle, iris-colour'd Wing,
The daring Muſe through the blue Ether ſoars,
'Till in his Orb ſhe hears the Regent ſing,
Whoſe beaming Influence gilds MOSCOVIA's Shores.

Near Neva's rapid Flood ſhe furls her Flight,
Where PETER's ſhining Domes and Tow'rs ariſe;
And views with Wonder and ſublime Delight,
The Arts of Athens near the polar Skies.

What means this Tremour in the ſighing Wood?
Why heaves the Neva from his loweſt Bed?
Lo! where emerging from the ſurging Flood,
The Empire's Genius rears his awful Head.

Bearing

Bearing the Form of the creative CZAR,
A ſabled Helm veil'd his majeſtic Brow,
O'er which terrific ſtream'd a blazing Star,
And changeful like the Boreal Meteor's Glow.

Siberia's Ermine, with her Snows that vy'd,
Was o'er his burniſh'd ſilver Armour thrown,
Flow'd amply like the undulating Tide,
And like a Flame his brandiſh'd Sabre ſhone.

Be huſh'd ye Winds!---Ye Surges! ceaſe your Roar.
Moſcovian Realms! your awful Genius hear:
Of Fate's dread Tidings and prophetic Lore,
He ſpeaks like Thunder to th' aſtoniſh'd Ear.---

" Fame's Trumpet ſounds---reſplendent CATHARINE! riſe;
" Purſue, in orient Climes, her ſhining Way;
" And read yon awful Record in the Skies,
" Expreſſive of thy Star's aſcendant Ray.

" See! o'er th' inverted Creſcent's changing Light,[1]
" Thy tutelary Croſs all luſtrous ſhine;
" The Heav'n-directing Sign, that led to Fight,
" And Vict'ry's Palms, Imperial CONSTANTINE.[a]

" Behold ye Thrones! from Her illuſtrious Stem,
" Behold a blooming CONSTANTINE appear![2]
" Whoſe Race ſhall Orient Rome's rich Diadem,
" And CONSTANTINE's Imperial Purple wear.

" Again the Fates confirm their dread Decree:
" Lo! round the Sun, bright, orb-crown'd Circles glow;
" Again yon iris-tinted Creſcent ſee,
" Beneath the GRECIAN CROSS, inverted bow.

" With ſuch tremendous, but enſanguin'd Glare,
" Portending Deſolation's riſing Hours,
" The Sword of Vengeance hover'd in the Air,[3]
" O'er the devoted Solymæan Tow'rs.

1 Note 1ſt. 2 Note 2d. 3 Note 3d.

[a] Euſeb. vit. Conſt. L. 1. c. 27.----31. p. 421. 423.

" See! where the fierce, Moſcovian Eagles fly,
" As conſcious of their Heav'n-devoted Prey;
" Hang like the Night, o'er all the Thracian Sky,
" And ſtrike the turban'd Legions with Diſmay.

" See! the grey Mufti ſmites his troubled Breaſt,
" Within his Moſque, with gleaming Creſcents crown'd;
" And daſhes, fill'd with Araby the bleſt,
" His fuming Cenſer on th' embroider'd Ground.

" Starting from many a mould'ring, Marble Tomb,
" He views a Train of gory Spectres riſe;
" And reads Byzantium's impending Doom,
" From their ſad Oriſons that pierce the Skies.---

---" Ah princely Youths! I know your Royal Line;[4]
" With fair Irene and her weeping Train:---
" Nor think, ye ſlaughter'd Race of Conſtantine!
" Your mournful Oriſons ſhall riſe in Vain.

" For

4 Note 4th.

" For now the riſing Hours, upon their Wing,
" Aſtræa's flaming Sword of Vengeance bear;
" And to *my* Realm's auſpicious Empreſs, bring
" The awful Mandates of the ſcriptur'd Sphere.

" Big with the Fates of Oriental Pow'rs,
" See where, ſublime, Her eagle Genius ſoars!
" Her Eyry builds on Theodoſia's Tow'rs,[5]
" And flies in Triumph round her Euxine Shores.

" Where'er She wings her tutelary Way,
" Arts, Wealth, and Commerce follow in her Train;
" With Science ſhed their humanizing Ray,
" And with their ſun-bright Luſtre mark her Reign.

" Near lucid Fountains, where the Muſes trod,
" Lo! Poeſy her new-born Laurel rears;
" That, at a Sultan's torpor-ſhedding Nod,
" Slept a long, triple Century of Years.[6]

" I ſee

[5] Note 5th. [6] Note 6th.

" I ſee o'er each poetic Mountain roam,
" Shades of great Bards, reviving Freedom's Fire,
" By Genius welcom'd to her Grecian Home,
" With Hymns of Rapture on his claſſic Lyre.

" And Lo! Religion bending from the Sky,
" Points to yon Croſs above the waining Horn;
" To Peace on Earth, to Happineſs on high,
" Celeſtial Guide of Myriads yet unborn.---

---" What mean thoſe Banners, like the golden Hair
" Of Comets, ſtreaming croſs the Sapphire Skies?---
" What mean thoſe Rocks depicted in the Air,
" Like hoary Caucaſus that proudly riſe?

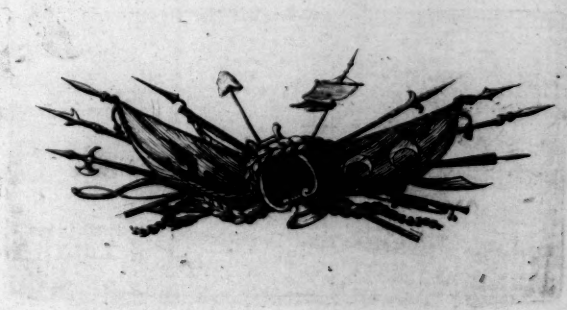
" What martial Hoſts, magnificently gay,
" Wind the Defiles in ſolemn Pomp along,
" To Cherſon's op'ning Portals ſhape their Way,
" That deck'd with Trophies, echo Triumph's Song?

" What

" What crouded Marts! What riſing Fanes and Tow'rs!
" What ſhining Prows the Boſphorus adorn!
" Where Commerce, fraught with all the Orient, pours
" Unbounded Treaſures from her golden Horn.

" Ye Radiant Viſions! croud not on my Sight:[b]
" Enough the Fates auſpiciouſly reveal
" By dun Futurity's dim, ſhadowy Light,
" Of CATHARINE's Glories, and of Human Weal."---

The Genius paus'd;----and from the Muſe's Sight,
On fragrant, amber Clouds was borne on high:
But ſtill the Croſs o'er the pale Creſcent's Light
Glow'd, 'till Night's Mantle had involv'd the Sky.



[b] "Viſions of Glory, ſpare my aching ſight,
"Ye unborn Ages, croud not on my Soul!"
GRAY.

698

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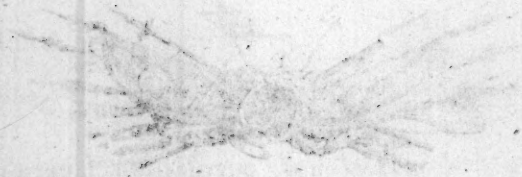

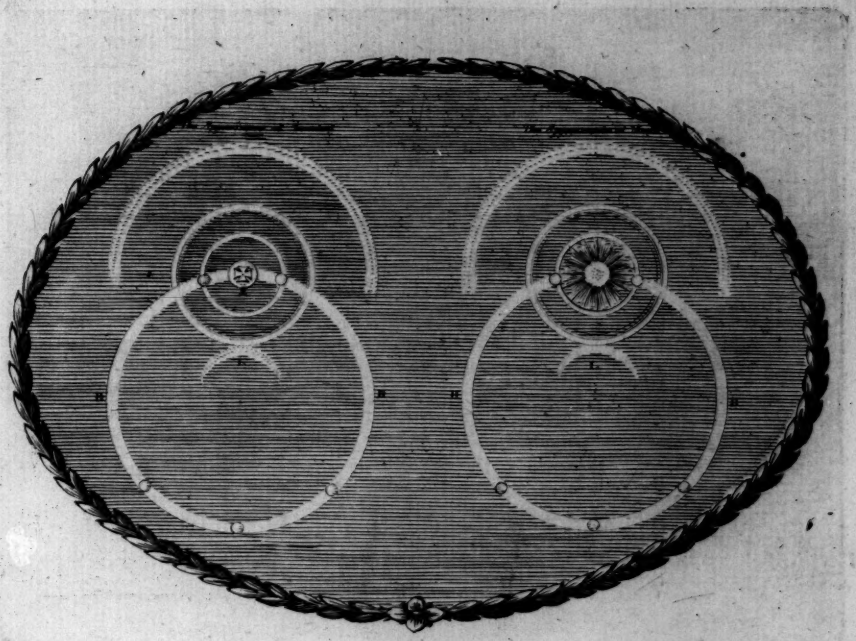

NOTES.

Moſco, Feb. 21, *O. S.* 1785.

I. ON February 19, 1785, at Noon, it being very clear Weather, there was ſeen in the Air the following Phœnomenon. Round the Sun was one Circle of Light, the Sun appearing in its full Luſtre. Without that was ſeen another Circle (BB) very large; the upper Part of which paſſed through the Sun; on which Circle were ſeen five bright yellowiſh Orbs, one on each Side the Sun, and three of the like Kind in the lower Part of the Circle. In the Centre of the great Circle appeared a ſhining Creſcent (L) like a Moon with the Horns downwards. This Phœnomenon continued 'till the Setting of the Sun, when, by Degrees, they began to loſe their Luſtre; but the Traces of them were apparent 'till ſix o'Clock P.M.

The very ſame Appearance was obſerved by Nikolai Petroviſch Archarof, at Ouſtugenai, and in Tſcherpovitza. At Ouſtugenai it was at the riſing of the Sun; and at Tſcherpovitza at half paſt nine in the Morning, with three additional Circles, two of which were perfect, and the other only the Segment of a Circle (D) of various Colours like a Rainbow.

At Yaroſlauf the ſame Appearances were remarked, only with this Difference, that a CROSS was ſeen in the Middle of the Moon's Diſk (A) and that the Creſcent appeared of various Colours (L) like the Rainbow. On the 20th, the ſame Appearance was again obſerved at Uſtugenaia at the Riſing of the Sun.

"I have

697

BRITISH
14 JY 74
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March, 23, 1785.

" I have juſt haſtily tranſcribed the above from the Account in the Ruſſian Language, publiſhed by Authority, of the Phœnomena, that make a very conſiderable Subject of Converſation throughout this Empire; eſpecially with Regard to the Appearance of the *Greek Croſs* over the *inverted Creſcent*.

" The Diagrams in proper Colours, I tranſmit you herewith, were ſent me from the Imperial Academy," &c.

The above Extracts are taken from a Letter inſerted in the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1785. P. 531.

II. The younger Grandſon of the reigning Empreſs of Ruſſia is named Conſtantine.

III. A Comet which bore the Reſemblance of a Sword, hung over the City of Jeruſalem for the Space of a whole Year.

Joſephus's Wars of the Jews. B. 7. C. 12.

IV. Knolles, in his Hiſtory of the Turks, has given a nervous and affecting Relation of the barbarous Murders of the Family of Conſtantine Palæologus, the laſt Emperor of the Eaſt; and of the tragical Fate of Irene, beheaded by the Hands of Mahomet, the Conqueror of Conſtantinople.

V. Kaffa in the Crimea; lately reſtored to its ancient Name of Thodoſia by the Orders of the Empreſs, ſince her Imperial Majeſty became Sovereign of that Peninſula; which is alſo re-named Tauris, or Taurica.

VI. Conſtantinople was taken by the Turkiſh Sultan Mahomet, on the 20th of May, 1453.

699